

18 September 2023

Attn: News Editors, Producers

For publication immediately

Media Release

Local government supports the Code of Conduct changes

The local government sector welcomes the recent changes to the Code of Conduct framework that passed Parliament last week. These changes are long overdue, with consultation on the changes first occurring in mid-2021.

LGAT President and Break O’Day Mayor Mick Tucker said “improving the Code of Conduct is a high priority for the sector, as the current framework is failing us,” he said.

“The current system spends unnecessary time and resources on dealing with trivial matters, while on the occasions when serious misconduct occurs, the framework fails to sanction the breaches adequately.

These shortcomings are at the core of the local government sector’s concerns over the framework,” he said.

The key changes endorsed by Parliament include requiring councils to implement a local dispute resolution policy, with the aim of resolving most issues via a mediation process before a complaint is heard by a full panel.

To support the local mediation process, there is a new requirement for the Code of Conduct panel to dismiss a complaint if the person making it does not adequately try and resolve the issue through the dispute resolution process.

Our sector is cautiously supportive of the changes, the test in how successful they will be is if the Code of Conduct panels are prepared to dismiss complaints that are trivial, vexatious or that do not participate in dispute resolution meaningfully.

We look forward to working with the State Government on the further changes needed to ensure a safe workplace for elected representatives.

-ENDS-